



Tarantula

Aphonopelma chaleodes

-Tarantulas are the largest spiders in the world. In the United States, they are mostly found in the Southwest.

-A female tarantula can live 20 - 25 years. A male tarantula only lives about 7 - 8 years.

-During most of the year tarantulas are nocturnal and stay close to their burrows.

-During mating season (October in northern New Mexico), males leave their burrows to search for

receptive females with which to mate. Tarantulas may walk considerable distances to achieve this goal. This is when people are most likely to encounter a tarantula.

-A tarantula's diet consists mostly of insects like grasshoppers and crickets. On occasion it can also eat small mammals or baby birds.

-Tarantula enemies include birds, snakes, other tarantulas, and tarantula hawks.

-When threatened a tarantula will rear up on its back legs exposing its fangs. If seriously threatened the tarantula may eject hairs from its abdomen that are coated with venom. Although tarantulas do have venom and can bite they pose no serious danger to humans.

-When a male tarantula finds a female (he does this by scent) he approaches the entrance to her burrow and taps on thin strands of web that lead into the burrow. If willing the female will exit the burrow and mating will occur. If the female is hungry she may make her anxious suitor her next meal.

